

# Design\*Sponge

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## we like it wild: daffodil hill

by Grace Bonney



On a rainy Sunday at the farmer's market this week we weren't expecting to find anything too exciting. With the weather as it was, we weren't sure if we'd find anything at all. To our surprise we found buckets of sunshine under a soggy tent belonging to Bill, the self-proclaimed Bulb Baron of the Central Coast. Bill has a passion for the narcissus genus and sells his flowers at local markets (and for those not lucky enough to

visit in person his amazing bulb varieties are available to purchase through his website). He was also kind enough to identify each of the flowers we purchased. The smaller heavily fragrant flowers such as Paper Whites and Early Splendor are often referred to as Narcissus, where the larger varieties like The Bride and Tonga, are commonly referred to as daffodils.





These perennials are ideal candidates for potted gardens, but grow amazingly well almost anywhere in the garden with little attention and can continue to bloom for years (keep these sun-loving beauties out of the shade and they'll be happiest). The varieties that Bill the Bulb Baron grows happen to be best for growing in our area of California, in a Mediterranean-like climate, but traditionally daffodils or dutch bulbs are very cold tolerant and actually need a "freeze" treatment in order to flower, so don't despair if you live in colder climates. The daffodil recently became the official flower of New York City and thanks to the city's Daffodil Project, begun as a commemoration of September 11th in an effort to replace the city's neglected open spaces with flowers, nearly four million daffodils bloom in New York City annually with another 500,000 bulbs being planted each year. If these flowers can live through an east coast winter and still come out swinging, then we think we can endorse them for almost any garden.





If you're getting flowers from your own garden make sure not to damage any leaves as these tender greens store the energy that will be required to produce next season's flowers. If the plant's leaves are cut before they naturally die down, the bulbs won't get the nourishment that they need. If you plan on using daffodils with other flowers in any arrangement, make sure to separate them in their own bucket of water for a few hours beforehand to help leach out some of the sappy toxins that can quickly clog the stems of other flowers.



We gathered an armful of Bill's offerings combined with some larger varieties from the flower market to make daffodil hills, small round arrangements that work best with lots of tightly packed blooms. We thought these fun little mounds would be great centerpieces for a spring brunch and look great combined with single stems in bottles and jars. Start with a few stems of different varieties, forming a round shape on top. While holding the stems tightly, add a row of more flowers very close together under the first few stems. The second row should help push up and support the heads as they sometimes like to look down. Continue adding rows to your bundle until you have a tallish, round mound. You may need to feed in a few stems from the top to fill out the shape. When you are happy with your hill, rubber band the stems together at the bottom of the stalks, then slide it up to the very top to keep your tightly bunched shape. Then cut the stems really short and rest them on a shallow vase or dish of water to display. Use a floral frog if your hill is too tall to remain upright and balanced on its own. In cut arrangements or given as potted bulbs, these sunny flowers help take the gray out of any day.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more beautiful daffodil images after the jump!































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